

**Final project**  
**“Gardening in Britain and Russia, national spirit”**  
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## What is gardening?



Gardening is the practice of growing and cultivating plants. In gardens, ornamental plants are often grown for flowers, foliage, or overall appearance; useful plants, such as root vegetables, leaf vegetables, fruits, and herbs, are grown for consumption. Gardening is considered to be a relaxing activity for many people.

Gardening ranges in scale from fruit orchards, to long boulevard plantings with one or more different types of shrubs, trees, and herbaceous plants, to residential yards including lawns and foundation plantings, to plants in large or small containers grown inside or outside. Gardening may be very specialized, with only one type of plant grown, or involve a large number of different plants in mixed plantings. It involves an active participation in the growing of plants, and tends to be labor-intensive, which differentiates it from farming or forestry.<sup>1</sup>

I have realized that the dictionaries give very boring definition of «garden». It's just a piece of land with trees, flowers, vegetables and fruit. It's unfair! The garden is something special! In many countries and cultures, designing beautiful gardens is considered to be an art. It is called garden design, distinguished from gardening a little bit, which generally means garden maintenance. Garden design can include different themes such as perennial, wildlife, Japanese, water, tropical or shade gardens etc.

Gardening is one of the oldest human activity . There are a lot of evidences of it in the history. The history of creating gardens connected with previous civilizations. In Sumero-Akkadians civilization (5 000 BC), gardening has made significant development. So many gardens were created in Ancient Egypt (1200 BC), in spite of the climate. Horticultural crops were cultivated in Greece. The famous hanging gardens of Babylon was created in the

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<sup>1</sup> [Wikipedia](#)

6th century B. C. Fruits, seeds and parts of plants discovered in the burial grounds.<sup>2</sup> People liked gardening many thousands years ago. And now they continue to do the same things. Why do they do it? Nowadays, we can buy any fruit, vegetables and flowers in markets. The answer is simple. Gardening is good for the soul.

Several studies have associated a lower risk of dementia with gardening, particularly that those who gardened on a regular basis had a 36% to 47% lower risk of dementia than those who did not garden.<sup>3</sup> When you are gardening, you get exercises, it improves mental health and one of the main advantages it provides healthy food.

I'm totally inspired of gardening. The best hobbies are those that stimulate the mind and jolt the body. At least, that's what gardening does for me, it just feels good in the soul.

### **History and traditions of gardening in Britain.**



English garden has a strong Chinese influence, Chinese influence was transmitted through the English diplomats. The fencing policy (the seizure of land from peasants who leased it , the owners of the land placed on the pastures sheep and getting wool became very profitable after the appearance of the cloth industry in the XV-XIX centuries. Farmers received small plots in their homes, which were broken by gardens and orchards in return) became the basis for the creation of the English gardens, that we know today.

But when Britain became a world Empire and acquired colonies, the country was so rich, that the house plots gradually turned into ornamental gardens without any agricultural value. Many farmers in the United Kingdom then turned to people, who are living in rural areas, but little connected with agriculture. That continues today. Thus gardening in England

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<sup>2</sup> [История садоводства России](#)

<sup>3</sup> [CNN](#)

is usually decorative in nature (in contrast to the Russian specifics). I'm talking here about the house gardening, not about agricultural enterprises or farms.

Let me give you some statistics from last century: "There are 9 million gardens in Great Britain. 80% of them have lawns, only 15% of them have no flowers, but 40% have no vegetables. 60 % of gardeners are male. Most popular flowers are rose, chrysanthemum, geranium and dahlia."<sup>4</sup>

So it was in the UK in the 1960s — when in Russia, then the Soviet, people were given their own plot in the garden Association. The size of this plot was 6 acres. Which became known as "dacha" from the word "give". There is no translation for this word in any language, like “sputnik”. This is only a Russian phenomenon. At the Russian dachas engaged in the cultivation of crops in contrast to the English gardens.

British horticulture has emerged with the arrival of the Romans, who created the gardens described by Pliny. The Romans planted many new plants. The Romans left this island, but the plants remained.

There were many vineyards in the South of England in the XI century, and they grew as long as competition from cheap French wine didn't make their existence meaningless. However, now the vineyards are experiencing a revival.

The next stage of the English gardening was being behind the walls of monasteries. The monks were the first creators of medicinal herbs gardens and then cooking herbs gardens, then started growing fruits and vegetables. The monks brought many useful garden plants from continental Europe.

After that the owners of the gardens were representatives of the nobility, their gardens began to copy the affluent bourgeoisie. The peasants got their land, located next to the house, after the policy of enclosure. The size of the land plot could reach one hectare.

Initially, these plots were used as miniature farms, which grew crops. In the future, with the growth of population on this area were built new cottages, and gardens, of course. They have grown vegetables and fruits, and many owners kept one or two pigs. So there was a type of the garden of the cottage.

Although in the monastery gardens, and especially in the gardens of the nobility, flowers grew, till the XVII century the cultivation of flowers didn't occupy any significant place.

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<sup>4</sup> журнал «Англия» №7 (3) за 1963 год статья «Садоводство в Англии»

Pioneers of floriculture were Hollanders, and from there pretty soon new colors and new techniques of gardening were moved to England. So English gardening became the world's leading in the XVIII century.

In the XVIII century English gardening has achieved its greatest victories. The country began to appear more and more plants from all over the world. New species appeared as useful and ornamental plants. The value of horticulture as an art form made to the foreground. This was due to the efforts of British planners and gardeners, who perceived and creatively reworked the experience of the great French and Italian gardens.

Also there was a very strong influence from China. The ambassadors of England at the court of the Chinese emperors returned home passionate fans of Chinese landscape gardening. As a result of all of these influences were born the English landscape gardening.

It happened in the era of prosperity of Britain, which characterized by the emergence of wealthy landowners, who wanted to spend money on the construction of the villas lush gardens.

Since the Saxons era, the people of England never were citizens, giving preference to rural areas. So they have created a new kind of gardening (the English landscape garden), which preserves and emphasizes the natural beauty of nature, when trees and shrubs are planted in the natural order (although in reality, the nature alone would never have created such beautiful results). The British turned therefore a considerable part of the territory of the country in the artistic landscape of painting by copying and "improving" nature.

Simultaneously, the ordinary people from towns and villages have developed a completely different type of gardening. The garden near the cottage could be different size: from a quarter of hectare and less to a full hectare or more. But there were every vegetables. Mixed in with them were growing strawberries and raspberries, currants and gooseberries, and fruit trees such as plum, apple and pear. Growers-fans began to improve the quality of fruit by crossbreeding and artificial selection of new varieties.

The concept of "the English landscape garden" was finally formed in XIX century. The science of gardening began to develop in two main lines: the first one was academic, in the writings of scientists and growers and botanists, and the second one was empirical, in the work of professional gardeners hired by the nobility, and the bourgeoisie to create gardens and care for them.

Among these professionals, I would mention, Joseph Paxton and William Robinson. Both were born in very poor families, both began working at a very young age in the rich gardens, both were the main gardeners in 25 years, they both achieved wealth and fame.

Thanks Paxton appeared greenhouses and glasshouses, as well as a large number of wonderful gardens that still exist. William Robinson, who began his career in a similar way, many believe the Creator of the "English landscape garden" in its final form. He forced the British to abandon a different kind of figured, stylized gardens and seek a "natural" or "wild" type of garden. But this garden is already different from the landscape garden of the eighteenth century, because Robinson with amazing effect of introduced exotic natural English landscape.

However, Robinson would never make such achievements in the transformation of English gardens, if he hadn't met and did not collaborate with another great gardener, her name is Gertrude Jekyll. Her love for the colors and the innate subtle understanding of the composition made it. She was an artist by profession and famous gardener.

Meanwhile, the influx into England the new plants became a powerful stream. In the early nineteenth century a group of people (professional gardeners, botanists and wealthy gardening enthusiasts), to explore and develop the art and science of horticulture, founded the Society, received further the name of the Royal society of gardeners (The Royal Horticultural Society (RHS). Its success was extraordinary. Since 1858 patron of the society was the husband of Queen Victoria Prince albert; as of 2013, the Royal horticultural society has 414.000 members.<sup>5</sup>

It is interesting to note that gardening in England miraculously broke class barriers. Thousands of societies of gardeners, most of them created and led by representatives of the working class of the cities and villages, brought together gardeners and middle class, and aristocracy. As a result, the exchange of new knowledge and material has affected all those interested in gardening.

The Royal horticultural society financed expeditions "hunters of plants" in North and South America, in China, in the Himalayas, the Caucasus, Tibet, Japan, South Africa and Australia. As a result of these expeditions to England came the seeds of many thousands of exotic plants that were successfully grown in the Botanical gardens in Kew (London),

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<sup>5</sup> Portalostranah.ru

Edinburgh and others, and in the gardens of rich people, from where they spread throughout the gardens.

### **Climate in Britain in comparison with Russian climate.**



It is necessary to say a few words about the English climate, without which it is impossible to understand why in English gardens there are plants of such a wide climatic range. The South of our country is about at the latitude of Kiev or Kharkiv. The Northern lowland part of England corresponds to the latitude of Moscow, and the North of Scotland to the latitude of St. Petersburg.

Thus, judging by the width, that an English winter would have to be so severe that they could survive only plants the temperate and Arctic zones. But since England is a small island, all points of which are influenced by the sea, and as its Western coast is washed by the warm Gulf stream, in fact there is a very mild climate.

In the South-West cold weather rarely lasts more than two weeks and the average winter temperature is about nine Celsius degrees. Frost usually does not exceed one or two degrees. Snow falls rarely and is not more than one or two days.

However, from time to time, about once in ten years, there happen severe winter with frost and snow, but it is far, especially on the coast, to the ordinary Russian winters. On the other hand, summer temperatures rarely exceed 25-27 degrees Celsius in the South-West. Precipitation ranges from 50 cm in the Southeast to 110 cm on the South-West. Some locations in South-West Scotland, their number reaches 200 cm, and these damp places don't actually know what the winter frosts.

As a result, in the English gardens are full of exotic rhododendrons and camellias, a variety of South American flowering bushes, trees from the Andes, all kinds of plants from



South Africa, California, from the shores of the Mediterranean sea. Just look in the catalogues of English garden, to ensure that they contain the widest assortment of plants varieties in the world.

### **Gardening in the UK now.**



And what is happening with horticulture in England now? We can say that basically now all become gardeners. Gardening is the subject of such hot debate in trains, clubs and pubs, as well as football. Everyone interested in gardening, regardless of profession or wealth.

The British are known as a nation of gardeners. And this is probably one reason why so many people prefer to live in houses rather than flats. A very high proportion of houses have small gardens attached, and those people without much space but with much enthusiasm can rent allotments quite cheaply. Many people in Britain spend a lot of leisure time working among their flowers, trees and vegetables.

Every town in Britain has one or more garden centres. These are like supermarkets for the home and garden. These places are very popular with British home-owners at the weekends.

The British take part in numerous flower-shows and vegetable shows with very good prizes. Such shows are very popular in Britain. In many places a competitive gardener's desire is to grow the biggest cabbages or leeks or carrots.

## **Gardening in Russia.**



In Russia gardening began when our ancestors cleared the land for cultivation. They uprooted the forest, but didn't uproot of apples and pears, keeping them on the sidelines. So was born the culture of fruit plants. Pits from cherries was discovered during excavations of ancient Novgorod.

Moscow was a tremendous garden in the XV and especially in the XVI. Foreigners described it. Near each house was a garden. There were apple, pear, currant, gooseberry, raspberry. Just as in the UK, a very important role in the development of Russian gardening was played by the monasteries.

When monasteries began to appear, new plants were dropped off from warmer places. Kings brought new plants too (especially Alexei Mikhailovich and Peter the great). Of course, most of the new plants do not survive due to the harsh winters.

In the second half of the XIX century in Russia there was a man, who decided to fill up assortment of fruit plants in more productive varieties. It was Ivan Vladimirovich Michurin. He selected more than 300 new species. The work of one man became the business of the state. Thanks Michurin in Russia there was created the unique gene pool of fruit and berry plants.

As I mentioned, perhaps the most distinctive feature of horticulture in Russia is the dacha. I think it doesn't need to explain. I have found some interesting statistics. In 2011, 51% of Russia's food was grown either by dacha communities (40%), or peasant farmers (11%) leaving the rest (49%) of production to the large agricultural enterprises. Again in 2011, dacha gardens produced over 80% of the countries fruit and berries, over 66% of the

vegetables, almost 80% of the potatoes and nearly 50% of the nation's milk, much of it consumed raw.<sup>6</sup>

While many European governments make living on a small-holding very difficult, in Russia the opposite is the case. In the UK one councillor's opinion regarding living on the land was, "Nobody would subject themselves to that way of life. You might as well be in prison"<sup>7</sup>. But our people are enjoying of this life style. During the communist period school children were obliged to visit their local farms to get hands-on experience harvesting food at a time when about 90% of the nation's food came from dacha gardens.

While the percentage of food grown by Russia's dacha has fallen since then it is still a massive contribution to the nation's food and forms an important part of their rural heritage. For example, during a period of economic growth from 2010 to 2014, a significant number of dachas were transformed into recreational areas.

Moreover, due to decreased purchasing power, Russians are shifting from vacationing abroad to domestic trips, with dachas thus growing in popularity. Indeed, dachas are a very good indicator of the changing economic situation in the country.

Take a walk through the streets of Russia's cities, and you will find old ladies selling herbs, fruit, berries and vegetables from their dacha gardens.

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<sup>6</sup> [naturalhomes.org](http://naturalhomes.org)

<sup>7</sup> [naturalhomes.org](http://naturalhomes.org)

## **Resources**

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kuskovo>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History\\_of\\_gardening#Introduction](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_gardening#Introduction)

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gardening#History>

[http://sad-russa.ru/sadovodstvo/istoria\\_sadovodstva.html](http://sad-russa.ru/sadovodstvo/istoria_sadovodstva.html)

<http://earthpapers.net/istoriya-sadovodstva-rossii>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/gardening/>

<http://www.ukgardening.co.uk/>

<http://www.plodosad.ru/stranitsyi-istorii-otechestvennogo-sadovodstva/>

<http://www.euromonitor.com/gardening-in-russia/report>

<http://naturalhomes.org/naturalliving/russian-dacha.htm>

<http://www.portalostranah.ru/view.php?id=365>